

not have a radical, impractical idea of how we should conduct the census. Common sense says we simply need to count everybody. The majority of Members simply want the Bureau to use the basic method we have always used in this country. We want to make some common sense improvements and spend enough money to make sure we count all Americans, but we are not trying to push an unprecedented, untested method on the Bureau, nor are we advocating an approach that will not work.

In fact, it is the administration that has the unprecedented and highly complex idea of how to conduct the census. They have unilaterally decided to abandon the method we have used in this country for 200 years because they have a new academic theory. If the Clinton administration believes they have a better method, they should present the plan to Congress and get our approval, but the simple fact that they want to try an untested, unprecedented method, the burden of proof is on them. The burden of receiving explicit congressional approval is on them. The burden of convincing the American people to pay for this extravagant experiment is on them.

The House has wisely formed a subcommittee to conduct oversight on the census, and I am honored to serve as its chairman and we will have a very successful committee. I believe the Census Bureau wants to work with us, but at the moment they do not have a leader. Martha Riche, the Director for the past several years, left office last week. This is a difficult time to lose a census director. The Commerce Inspector General and the General Accounting Office have made clear that the census is not in great shape at this moment. In a few months, they will be conducting some important dress rehearsals in Sacramento, California, and Charleston, South Carolina and in South Dakota. Simultaneously, they must continue ramping up for the 2000 census. The Bureau is in dire need of leadership and organization, and they need a director as soon as possible.

I want to make my position clear about the qualifications needed for the next census director. First, Mr. President, do not play political games with the legitimacy of the House of Representatives. Do not send up a political spokesperson who is not committed to faithfully carrying out the intent of the law. I have said I have no litmus test, but, Mr. President, you better not have a litmus test either. Your nominee must be prepared to plan and carry out a full enumeration, because that is the will of the majority of this Congress.

Article I of our Constitution requires Congress to conduct the decennial census to apportion Representatives among the States. We take it very seriously. I believe, therefore, that it would be wise to consult the House extensively before we nominate a new census director. We cannot risk the

people's confidence in the 2000 census. The next census director must not be a political lightning rod for untried ideology. In no measure a successful census is defined by the people's confidence and its fairness and accuracy. The majority of the Representatives and Senators oppose the administration's new untested methodology of how to conduct the 2000 census. It would be a tragic mistake to put forward a nominee who the congressional majority views as unwilling to work with us.

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Over the next several months, our subcommittee plans to hold a series of hearings to learn more about the status of the planning for the census. We intend to examine the design flaws in the Bureau's complicated plans. We will make sure that the Bureau moves forward with planning for a new numeration as the recent legislation signed by the President requires.

I hope to offer constructive and practical ideas of how we can improve on past censuses without risking a failed census. I do not believe in throwing out the baby with the bath water. We have a great deal of work to do to save the census. Let us get started.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS OF UNITED STATES AND LATVIA CONCERNING FISHERIES OFF THE COAST OF THE UNITED STATES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGAN) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Resources and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), I transmit herewith an Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Latvia extending the Agreement of April 8, 1993, Concerning Fisheries Off the Coasts of the United States, with annex, as extended (the 1993 Agreement). The present Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes at Riga on February 13 and May 23, 1997, extends the 1993 Agreement to December 31, 1999.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Republic of Latvia, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 3, 1998.

ANNUAL REPORT OF RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD, FISCAL YEAR 1996—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Ways and Means:

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Railroad Retirement Board for Fiscal Year 1996, pursuant to the provisions of section 7(b)(6) of the Railroad Retirement Act and section 12(l) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 3, 1998.

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET SUBMISSION

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today the Committee on the Budget began the process of reviewing the 1999 budget submission of the President. It was very disappointing for a Member who is a very fiscally conservative Member to see a proposal that has more smoke and mirrors of how to spend more money.

We had a budget agreement that we agreed to last year, and I had the pleasure of being at the South Lawn of the White House when the President signed that document in August. Less than 6 months later, we have \$150 billion more in spending. I know they have a lot of neat little gimmicks of how to disguise the spending, but the bottom line is it is not in the spirit of the budget agreement that was signed last year and in the reconciliation bill that was signed into law by the President. That was not the intent of the agreement that we worked on last year.

For those of us who went along with that agreement, knowing that we would have to have tight spending controls this coming year, we feel very, very disappointed; and I feel it is not right to try to get us to move ahead with more spending programs at this time.

One of the ways to justify it is this tobacco settlement. I am not a pro-tobacco Congressman. I would be classified as an anti-tobacco Congressman. But the point is, we should not begin spending money until we have it in our hands.

We do not know what kind of agreement will be reached. The administration claims they are going to send one up in a few weeks, but we do not have a plan before us right now. So how are we going to have this money and why are we spending it before we have it in

our hands? I think it is very risky and irresponsible to try to spend that money.

I also am very concerned that what is going to drive a tobacco settlement is that we want to spend money. We need to spend more money on day care, so I will settle any type of tobacco agreement. That will be very risky and dangerous. The tobacco settlement should stand on its own.

Yes, there are going to be some revenues there; and, yes, we are going to share some of that with the States. We have to address the whole liability issue, which is a great concern to all of us. There are a lot of legal fees involved that are going to be questioned.

It is going to be a complicated process. It is going to be worked on in a bipartisan fashion, and we need to move forward on that. But let us not spend that money now. It is not part of the budget. We do not have the money in our hands. So to try to say this is the reason we want to have a budget agreement so we can spend money on these new programs is just plain wrong.

So I am very disappointed that this administration sent up a budget that, because of smoke and mirrors, they classify things as mandatory spending. They are using waste and fraud as a way to save money, and we will spend it even though we do not have it in our hands. Let us stop playing tricks with the American people and let us talk straight with them.

Let us live with the agreement that we agreed to last year. Let us live within the spending caps. Let us wait and see if we have a surplus. And when we have the surplus, my opinion personally is that we need to address the debt problem, start applying it to the debt. We do have a Social Security problem and a transition cost as we reform Social Security. And, number three, we should give tax cuts to the American people.

So I think we should address that once we have the surplus in hand. Until we have that surplus in hand, there is no way that we can continue doing that.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET RETURNS TO THE ERA OF BIG GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the Majority Leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, last week, we heard in the President's State of the Union address some of his priorities and his agenda for this next year. And, interestingly enough, when the budget came out this past week, we got a more detailed description about some of his ideas for new Washington spending.

I harken back to 1994 and what happened at that point in time and after the big government agenda was annihilated at the polls in 1994. In the State

of the Union address in 1995, the President came forward and said, the era of big government is over. I think a lot of people in this country took consolation in that statement. That was just a few short years ago.

Well, now a couple of years later, we are talking about a potential surplus, which is something that is remarkable—the first in our country's history in some 30 years. Yet I am reminded of the fact I think about whenever we start talking about a surplus in this particular environment in Washington, D.C. It is like a liberal politician's dream, but a taxpayer's nightmare.

Mr. Speaker, I think as we look at the statement in 1995 about the era of big government being over and then look at where we are today in terms of potential surplus and what that means for the future of this country and what that means for our country's budget, I think we have to make some important decisions. We are truly at an historic crossroads in terms of the future of this country.

Now, when the President laid out his budget, I think there were some \$150 billion in new Washington spending included in that budget; and, with respect to his goals, I think most of us probably were in agreement, on the importance of priorities like caring for and educating our children as well as providing health care for an aging population. These are important issues and on that I think all of us agree.

However, the differences are very clear in trying to determine how best to achieve those goals and particularly in the context of a potential revenue surplus.

The President's programs are an incredibly expansive reach by the Federal Government into the lives of most Americans. It is remarkably inconsistent on the one hand to talk about using a potential surplus to pay down the debt and to pay back Social Security and, on the other hand, to talk about increasing the size and reach of the Federal Government by some \$150 billion in new Washington spending and bigger government.

Many people, myself included, have been very confused by the mixed signals that the President is sending. Now I happen to believe that there is a responsible public policy approach to dealing with a potential surplus. For that reason, I am cosponsoring legislation offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. NEUMANN) which is consistent with a number of important policy objectives.

Simply put, the Neumann legislation would apportion any potential surplus in three ways. First, it would allocate two-thirds of any surpluses to paying off debt and restoring the governmental trust funds: Social Security, transportation, environmental. The final third would go toward reducing taxes on hard-working Americans.

It goes a step beyond that in a very important way, by putting a systematic plan in place to retire our coun-

try's \$5.5 trillion debt in the course of the next 30 years, spending 1 percent less than what we take in in revenue every year, and applying that 1 percent to paying down the debt. Again assuming modest or moderate economic growth rates, we can be completely debt free by the year 2026.

In addition to winning the war on drugs, I cannot think of anything else that would be more important for the future of our children and our grandchildren. It would also free up the \$250 billion annually that the Congress appropriates every year just to pay the interest on our \$5.5 trillion debt.

That is an important point. We go through the budgetary process every year. Before we spend anything on roads and bridges or highways, before we spend anything on any other social programs, we have to appropriate the \$250 billion in round numbers that is necessary and essential to pay for the interest on the \$5.5 trillion debt.

Just as important, the Neumann legislation would allow us actually to give something back to the taxpayers. After all, it is their money. I happen for one to believe that if the President is able to build \$150 billion into his budget for new Washington spending, in the alternative, he ought to be able to come up with that amount of money to give back to the taxpayers.

I believe that the best way that we can help working families deal with tough issues like child care is to give them some money back and to allow them to make the best decision about how to address this very important need.

The President's proposal tends toward installing Uncle Sam as your nanny. His plan would have Washington determine which children and which child care providers get Washington's assistance.

The bottom line question I think we have to ask ourselves as members of this country is, who would we rather have raising our kids? Would we rather have the Federal Government do it, or would we rather have the American family? For me, that is a no-brainer.

But if we give people inside the Washington Beltway long enough, they will try to create a risk-free society. Big government will eventually guarantee you child care, education, health care, guarantee a job, probably guarantee a fixed income, guarantee a retirement, possibly a big screen television, and the list goes on and on.

But the cost will be high. Because, in doing all that, there will be a corresponding decrease in the freedom that we enjoy in this country and more and more taxes to pay for all that security. Ultimately, we end up with a bureaucrat in the crib, a bureaucrat at day care, a bureaucrat in the classroom, a bureaucrat in the workplace, and a bureaucrat in your living room. We may, in fact, even have a bureaucrat in the coffin with us just to make sure that we do not, in fact, take anything with us.